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IN RE IMPERIALISM.

I.

Captain Mahan and the Outlook.[1]

Unless all the signs of the times prove to be misleading, certain contemporary movements in the politics of the world are destined to influence most profoundly not only the nations of Western civilization but the entire human race as well. Indeed, every observer of the present trend of events must be impressed by the fact that we are living in an age of transcendent interest and importance—an age probably the greatest the world has yet seen. To state these facts more compendiously, history is being made before our very eyes with startling rapidity; and never before was the expression —indeed, one may say the maxim—of the late Professor Freeman truer, that history is past politics and politics future history. Of course we do not mean to be understood as assenting, even by implication, to the burden of Professor Freeman's thesis; for, although politics occupies an important place in history, many other elements are surely to be recognized in the progress of humanity. How unfortunate, for example, would it be for us Americans were our future history to be our present politics! Seriously, however, we are bound to recognize certain great impulses which, taking their rise in the domain of politics, exert an undying influence on the human race. To such impulses may be traced very often the migrations of peoples, the rise and fall of states, armed conflicts, the alterations of national boundaries, and the shifting of preponderating influence among the nations of the earth. Political agencies may also quicken or destroy the literary life of a people, to say nothing of their influence for good or ill on religious convictions and practices.

[1] "The Interest of America in Sea Power, Present and Future." By Capt. A. T. Mahan, D.C.L., LL.D., United States Navy. 8vo. Pp. vi., 314. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1898.

The student of contemporary events is—to borrow a term of the biologists—studying history in embryo; and it makes very little difference whether those events portray the life of a commune, a state, or of the world. The process is precisely the same. He is, under such circumstances, simply studying objectively an organism the manifestations of whose life are pretty much the same whether they happen to be in a vestry meeting, a congress, or in a parliament of nations.

Interest in the present attitude of the powers centers largely in the fact that there are now in the world several empires each greater than Rome was in her palmiest days, each imbued substantially with the same ideas of religion and civilization, and each bent on territorial aggrandizement, if not for political advancement, at least for the purpose of furthering the needs of commerce. Hence, in spite of its materialism, there is much wisdom in the saying attributed to the Italian statesman Crispi that the wars of the future are to be commercial rather than political. Under present circumstances we should accordingly not be surprised to find a general feeling of alarm—indeed, even of dismay—pervading diplomatic circles throughout the world; and the leading nations more or less actively engaged in preparing themselves for that general struggle whose dark shadows are even now stealing across more than one frontier. Naturally enough, the catastrophe toward which we appear to be hurrying is feared and deprecated by all who would fain see peace and good will lastingly established among men, but unfortunately indications are not wanting which tend to show that no human power can very much longer avert the threatened blow to international concord. It may be that from the point of view of organized humanity we are still in the age of feudalism, and that just as the modern state rose on the ruins of the discordant factions of the Middle Ages, so that world-state, long the dream alike of prophets and publicists, can come into existence only after our present warring elements shall have been swept away to make room for a higher form of life. Be that as it may, it is certainly far from encouraging to find that never before in human history

have so many men been employed in military and naval preparations as to-day. Why these preparations on land and sea? Why these long and earnest consultations in the council chambers? Why these illusive diplomatic nets which are already entangling the affairs of the world? Is any one inclined to fancy that these armies and navies will remain permanently inactive? or that the triple alliance of Germany, Austria, and Italy was formed for pacific objects? or that autocratic Russia and republican France constructed the dual alliance because of any inherent fondness for each other? Turn to our own country. What confronts us? A land where, since the day of Washington, isolation has been preached as a cardinal doctrine of political faith, suddenly finds itself swept by overmastering forces into the vortex of world-wide passions and, obedient to the instincts of self-preservation, forced to adopt a policy more in keeping with the altered conditions of the day.

To explain the phenomena thrust upon our attention by recent events many reasons may be advanced, and these will depend naturally upon the point of view of the person who may happen to advance them. That there are causes for them will be assumed, however, for few are disposed to urge that the events of this world occur haphazard or by chance. I am quite aware, for example, that there are some who attribute to the extraordinary advance of Russia much of the tension now prevailing in diplomatic circles; and, perhaps naturally enough, those afflicted with this form of Russophobia actually believe every move of that great country to be a covert attack on Great Britain. Then, again, there are not a few who will insist that the menacing clouds on the political horizon are the creation of that ambitious, though bizarre, young man who dreams of an empire worthy of the greatest of the Hohenzollern line. Many again, particularly in England, ascribe to envy of British growth and prosperity a continental union on whose banner is inscribed this legend of St. Petersburg, Paris, and Berlin: "Great Britain must be destroyed." None of these theories, however, can prove entirely satisfactory. The circle of the Tsar's interests may be

widening; Emperor William may be building air castles; and England, because of overweening conceit, or a flagrant disregard of the rights of others, may have alienated the support of a patient world rather than incurred its jealousy; but none of these facts can possibly explain the many grave problems now confronting the peace of the world. Barring Russia, it would unquestionably be nearer the mark to say that commercial rivalries arising from the modern industrial revolution and the system of protection with which we are so unfortunately familiar, have forced all progressive nations either to seek new markets in the less-developed portions of the world or to adopt a system of colonial expansion like that of Great Britain. Accordingly we see nowadays several powers contending for the possession of the same field which in times past would have been appropriated as a matter of course by the great mistress of the sea.

Modern inventions and discoveries, including the railway, the telegraph, and machinery of all kinds, have not only altered entirely the relations between employer and employed, but have also led, in all progressive countries, to an astonishing growth in wealth and population. To these social and economic changes add the fact that on all sides towns have sprung up as if by magic and cities are fast assuming dimensions well calculated to arouse disquieting forebodings, when, remembering their many grave problems, one realizes that there are now no limits to be set to the magnitude of these vast hives of humanity. Naturally enough, however, the wheels of modern industry in their tireless revolutions grind out more products than can possibly be consumed at home; so that new markets must be sought if industrial countries hope to escape general bankruptcy. For it is to be borne in mind that the bulk of the population in all growing countries is absolutely dependent upon factories and other forms of industry for a livelihood. To escape the stress of that keen competition fostered by modern conditions, we have treated free trade, the ideal of the average economist, as an empty dream, and adopted a system of so-called protection. Captain Mahan accordingly draws at-

tention very forcibly to the fact that this policy, in connection with the theory of isolation, has exercised a baleful influence on our development as a nation. We agree with this accomplished naval author, whose writings have attracted profound attention throughout Europe, that, while thus securing the home market, we have in a measure lost the market of the world, which cannot be secured by legislative enactments. Emigration, to be sure, has in large measure tended to check discontent among the masses whenever population has exhibited a tendency to press upon the means of subsistence; and this mode of escape from disheartening environments has been especially noticeable since the introduction of cheaper means of transportation. At the same time, continental powers have not viewed complacently the annual loss they have thus sustained in population, especially when the emigrants, through the liberal naturalization laws of the new world, quickly cast off all allegiance to the fatherland and became permanently incorporated into the body of American life. Having before them, therefore, the splendid example of Great Britain, under whose imperial policy colonial expansion has extended to the more distant parts of the earth, the rivals of Great Britain—particularly Germany, since her remarkable commercial development—are beginning to bestir themselves with the hope that they can at once furnish homes for their overcrowded population and markets for the excessive output of their industrial establishments. Behold, therefore, the troubles in Africa; the seizure of Madagascar; and, more recently still, the startling events in tottering China.

These facts, to say nothing of the results of our war with Spain, have brought us face to face with our foreign policy; and in Captain Mahan's book the reader will find this question discussed with a breadth of view and keenness of penetration which will go far toward disarming criticism. Our author's volume is, in fact, a "collection of detached papers," contributed at different intervals to the various magazines of the country; and, in spite of frequent repetition, never becomes tedious. The following titles of the eight

articles composing Captain Mahan's book will convey an idea of its range: "The United States Looking Outward," "Hawaii and Our Future Sea Power," "The Isthmus and Sea Power," "Possibilities of an Anglo-American Reunion," "The Future in Relation to American Naval Power," "Preparedness for Naval War," "A Twentieth Century Outlook," "Strategic Features of the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico."

Captain Mahan deserves the gratitude of his countrymen for having pointed out so clearly the duty of looking to distant markets, and the relation to them of our own immense powers of production, while a remarkable tribute to his wise observations concerning Hawaii, written more than five years ago, is furnished by the fact that the most convincing arguments in favor of the annexation of that Pacific group were drawn from his writings. There is, moreover, something prophetic about his utterances concerning the isthmus and sea power. The future of the world unquestionably belongs to the owners of the greatest battleships. Nor should it be forgotten that our entire navy has been rebuilt. These truths compel us to believe that for weal or for woe this nation has departed from her time-honored policy of isolation, to enter upon a new career of expansion. At the same time we must remember that the world is to-day smaller than ever before. We have been irresistibly drawn into the movements of Europe, for we are now part of Europe. Everything that affects the rest of the civilized world affects us.

This development of self-consciousness on the part of our country was slow and discouraging, but when it came the hearty and spontaneous outburst of sympathy which greeted it indicated plainly that the people were ahead of their government. Nevertheless this sudden awakening of a great nation to a realization of the fact that it is a member of the family of states, with certain great rights and duties, may be regarded as one of the most significant events of the departing century; for the irony of events has brought home to every normally constituted person the truth that, whether we like it or not, our country is destined to play a leading rôle

in international affairs. It is no longer a question of what we should do, for if the tragic events of this year, of such thrilling interest to us all, mean anything, they mean that we have not flinched when forced to decide whether we ought to continue a policy of selfish isolation or to adopt a line of conduct, in our external relations, more in harmony with the altered conditions of the day. The issue has been met and decided. In point of fact the same issue has already been often met and answered. It was met and answered when we purchased Louisiana, fought our second war of independdence with Great Britain, annexed Texas, conquered Mexico, and added Alaska to our possessions. It is worthy of note that each step we took in our march across this continent was attended by a certain amount of opposition from those whom, for want of a better name, let us agree to call Little Americans. But Anglo-Saxon principles of growth triumphed then, as they have triumphed at all times; and we are to-day, in spite of captious objections, one of the empires of the earth.

At the outset we must grasp firmly the fact that, after years of doubt and uncertainty and strife, we have at last attained to nationality. Standing thus on the ruins of sectionalism, we are to remember the futility of adopting a foreign policy which shall prove good for all time; for a policy, being founded on calculation, expediency, and circumstances, must of necessity change with the shifting conditions of national and international life. We lay stress on this point not so much for the purpose of faulting Captain Mahan as to guard a casual reader against hasty deductions. What are we to do? In the first place, our country will at all hazards maintain the Monroe Doctrine according to its latest expanded interpretation. All south of us is our *hinterland*, and the islands of the adjacent seas come unquestionably within the sphere of our influence; and accordingly we must and shall resist every effort on the part of European states to acquire fresh possessions in this hemisphere. To maintain successfully this position we must put ourselves on a proper war footing, or, as Washington advised in his

Farewell Address, we must maintain suitable military establishments. Instead of provoking war, there is every reason for agreeing with the opinion of Captain Mahan that such preparations will make for peace, to say nothing of the uplifting influences they would exert in an age largely given over to excessive materialism. But, while every one will hope to see our army and navy made strong enough to ward off attack and punish an adversary promptly, no true American could wish his country to play the part of a swaggering bully bent on fighting the world. Then, again, it seems to be generally conceded that we must entirely reform our diplomatic service. The old idea that any one can act as consul or minister must be abandoned at once, for under modern conditions the gravest questions may arise at the smallest posts. All the consular offices should be governed by civil service rules; and members of this profession—if under our present system it can be called a profession—should be sufficiently compensated to show the rest of the world that this is an enlightened country. Proper attention to this most important branch of the civil service will increase largely our influence abroad; and our government may yet see the wisdom of emulating the example of France by founding a special school of diplomacy, thus completing the work done at West Point and Annapolis, to which Captain Mahan makes so much reference indirectly.

This brings us to the question of territorial expansion. Should the United States acquire any more lands? This question has time and again been answered in the affirmative, and our recent annexation of Hawaii was in keeping with our time-honored policy. "Shut out from the Sandwich Islands as a coal base," declares our author, "an enemy is thrown back for supplies of fuel to distances of 3,500 or 4,000 miles—or between 7,000 and 8,000 coming and going—an impediment to sustained maritime operations well-nigh prohibitive;" and few who are familiar with the facts in the case will be inclined to question his statement that the annexation of Hawaii has been no mere sporadic effort, irrational because disconnected from an adequate

motive; but a first fruit and token that the nation in its evolution has aroused itself to the necessity of carrying its life beyond the borders which heretofore have sufficed for its activities. For strategic reasons alone, therefore, we were justified in acquiring this group of islands, not to mention their commercial and political importance. No less important to us will be the Isthmian Canal, whether by way of Panama or Nicaragua, which the not distant future will see constructed largely under American auspices. A glance at the map will show at once the necessity for this long-projected undertaking, a concrete illustration of whose desirability was furnished a few months ago by the long and hazardous voyage of the Oregon. The chief political result of this canal, to quote Captain Mahan, "will be to bring our Pacific coast nearer not only to our Atlantic coast but to the great navies of Europe." Its commercial advantages cannot be overestimated. The rapidly growing trade with China, Japan, and the far East generally will be stimulated in a most inconceivable manner, to say nothing of its effects on our commercial and political relations with Mexico and South and Central America. As Captain Mahan forcibly remarks, "under this increased importance of the Isthmus, we cannot safely anticipate for the future the cheap acquiescence which, under very different circumstances, has been yielded in the past to our demands;" and it is notorious that European powers are already betraying symptoms of increased sensitiveness as to the value of positions on the Caribbean Sea, and are strengthening their grip upon those they now hold. It is true the sharp practice by which Great Britain entrapped us into becoming a party to the Clayton-Bulwer treaty may, in a measure, impede our progress in this direction, even though the opinion should prevail that the treaty is no longer obligatory. But even if it is still binding, it will not necessarily thwart us; for England's joint control with us over the enterprise might prove a help rather than a hindrance. Of course the many strategic points along the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico are not likely to be permanently ignored, especially since ex-

perts have begun so earnestly to direct the attention of their governments thereto, and Germany has turned her ambitious eyes on Holland and the Dutch possessions generally. Meanwhile every good citizen should lay to heart the fact, so well emphasized by Captain Mahan, that events throughout the world show us that peoples of varying degrees of civilization and representing antagonistic races, with different material and spiritual ideals, are coming in closer contact than ever before. We therefore owe it to ourselves and to posterity that the duty intrusted to us be faithfully performed. That duty, on the one hand, is to be prepared to advance the outposts of civilization by enlightening, as far as possible, the less advanced races with whom we come in contact; and, on the other, to be fully prepared by the possession of important points of defense to meet attacks from any source whatsoever. Hawaii, the canal, and certain points in the vicinity of the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico will thus put us at a great advantage.

As for the territory we shall acquire by the treaty with Spain, it is too early to speak advisedly. At the same time it is pertinent to refer to one or two exceedingly grave questions that will arise in regard to our new possessions. What shall we do with them? Shall we retain them, or sell them, or grant them their independence? In the case of Cuba, honor will of course prevent us from forcible annexation, although whenever the people of that nascent republic express a wish to join us they may count upon a hearty welcome. Porto Rico will be retained as part of the war indemnity. But these islands are virtually portions of our continent, and nearly every broad-minded statesman of this country has been in favor of their acquisition by us. There will be no trouble concerning them, and it is hard to see what constitutional objection can be raised against their annexation; for it was Chief Justice Marshall who declared that the right to wage war gave us the right to conclude peace and to acquire lands by conquest or by purchase. Our constitution is intended to help, not to hinder, us in our progress. The really serious difficulty will be furnished by

the question of the final disposition of the Philippines. Owing to their number, remoteness, and imperfect development, socially and politically, this group is by no means so desirable as the islands of the West Indies. At the same time, we could not, in view of recent events in China, convey them to any European power without causing very serious complications. Hence, finding ourselves suddenly implicated in the far Eastern question—which indeed is our Western question—can we afford to lose so favorable an opportunity for protecting our commercial interests in Asia? It is to be hoped, however, that this may be done by preserving suitable coaling stations in the islands rather than by taking them under our control; for it may be seriously doubted whether we are yet prepared to govern suitably possessions so distantly situated. Let us, therefore, be content to hold them temporarily as a lien until the satisfaction by Spain of the demands we shall make.

In conclusion we cannot refrain from expressing the hope that, in view of impending changes in the administration of our foreign affairs, this extremely delicate function of government may be so reformed as to strengthen it. As is well known, monarchical governments intrust the foreign policy to the executive rather than to the legislative branch of administration, thus securing that promptness and secrecy so essential to diplomatic success. Unfortunately, when the framers of the constitution came to assign this subject to its appropriate branch of government there was great fear and jealousy of the executive, which, however reasonable then, cannot on sane grounds exist in the present day. Hence to Congress was given the royal right of declaring war, while to the President, by and with the advice of the Senate, was intrusted the power to conclude treaties and appoint foreign representatives. By virtue of its right thus to approve or reject treaties, the Senate guides the course of our foreign affairs; and some European critics, like Mr. Bryce, are disposed to regard this as an element of weakness. At the same time it should be mentioned that the Senate discusses a treaty in secret session, and one of the rules governing

such sessions is that all confidential communications made by the President to the Senate shall not be divulged until the Senate removes the injunction of secrecy. In this connection it may not be out of place to refer to another curious anomaly which, in view of our apparent drift toward imperialism, may cause serious inconvenience. It seems that, although the constitution vests the treaty-making power in the President and Senate, Congress has several times played an important part in the matter; and it has even been contended that Congress should be consulted in advance when an annexation of territory is contemplated. Another serious obstacle may arise from the fact that Congress holds the purse; and although the lower house has never refused to appropriate money called for by a treaty, there is no machinery for forcing it to do so. But the present trend of events obliges us to examine thoroughly our existing methods for the administration of foreign affairs and, if possible, to provide in advance for any mishap. This phase of the subject Captain Mahan has not touched upon, nor should we perhaps have expected him to do so. Nevertheless it is well for the citizen to know that increased activity abroad is impossible without increased strength at home. It is quite possible for a republic to conduct successfully a vigorous foreign policy; but we shall quickly learn that the legislature, even acting through a committee, is not omnipotent; and that it will be the part of wisdom to intrust as much as possible this difficult branch of administration to the President, aided by the Senate, rather than to allow it to become the football of partisans by being usurped by the House.

X. Y. Z.

II.

Our Imperial Destiny.

Among those who in increasing numbers during the past decade have urged on the people of the United States the change in policy that is suggested by the above title none is more talented or more urbane than the distinguished author

of the "Life of Nelson." With Captain Mahan it is possible to discuss any question with an amenity that it might be difficult to maintain with vociferous pulpit orators, cynical exploiters of popular manias in both houses of Congress, or the yelping pack of the yellow curs of journalism; though all these support the contentions of Captain Mahan so far as their intellectual and moral capacities enable them to comprehend them.

It is urged by Captain Mahan that to wage a defensive war, into which we may at any time be forced, it is necessary to be able to wage an offensive one; that to do this it is necessary to have a much larger navy than we have ever possessed; and that, in order to make this navy efficient, it is necessary to have sundry fortified harbors in various parts of the world, notably in the Caribbean Sea and in the Pacific Ocean. He contends further that, in so far as we control the sea by our navy, we shall control the trade of the sea, and that without this trade we cannot grow as we should in wealth and power.

When Captain Mahan began writing on these subjects nearly a decade ago they seemed rather in the nature of an academic discussion. The majority of Americans instinctively shrank from tasks that they had no reason to think themselves competent to perform and from burdens of financial outlay that the unparalleled debauchery of the electorate by pensions made taxpayers hesitate to assume. However, amid the protests of some prudent folk, the construction of a new navy was begun, and was hardly even partly completed before, like a boy with a new knife, its possessor was seized with a desire to see whether it would work. It had been said over and over again that with a nation like ours readiness to fight would mean fighting, and as soon as we felt able to whip a third-class power without risk to anything but the taxpayers' pockets and the national character we found ourselves at war with the country that had possessed for three hundred years, without much profit to herself, those islands, coaling stations, etc., that the imperialists had been dangling before the popular eye till it was hypnotized into

thinking them the iridescent jewels of imperial dominion, the first fruits of our manifest destiny.

This is not the place to consider the cause or the justification of the recent war with Spain, whether, as some aver, it was undertaken at the direct instigation of the Lord of Hosts, a sort of Jehovah-Moloch, bent on increasing his glory and the area of Protestantism and missionary enterprise, or whether we took up arms at the call of that same "manifest destiny" that, as Mr. Lowell remarked on a similar occasion a half century ago, is "half on't ignorance and t'other half rum;" or whether this religious sentiment and this ignorance and this rum were skillfully made the tool of scheming contractors, news-venders, army and navy officials, and demagogues. And as this is not the place to discuss the causes of the war, neither is it the place to discuss its justice, or even the justice of the sixth and eighth Commandments. Nor is it the place to inquire whether, when our Senate and Representatives solemnly declared that they went into this war with no intention of territorial aggrandizement, they were then consciously lying or no, since the gullible sentimental multitude, who believed them then, is already prepared not only to condone, as did Prince Bismarck, a falsehood justified by the result of a war, but to glory openly in their intent to make the nation a liar. Else what means this talk of retaining Cuba, propagated by the newspaper, the cartoon, and the congressional interview; propagated even by the accredited ministers of the God of truth and the Gospel of peace?

It is too late now to discuss any of these things practically, and it is too early to discuss them historically. It is too late to save the country from whatever loss of wealth or honor or character may be involved in the just ended struggle. But we attacked a nation so weak and so unprepared that, unless others came to her aid, it was reasonably certain that she might be stripped of her raiment and left half dead with the same impunity that those persons enjoyed who once met a man going from Jerusalem to Jericho. What then shall be done with the spoil, and what will the spoil do with us? A re-

cent cartoon represents America as a bumptious youth with two huge apples, labeled according to the modest assumption that such minds as these cartoons attract will require an explanation of their humor. The apples bear the words "Philippines" and "Cuba." The nations of the world, represented by other schoolboys, ask the youth more or less deferentially for bites, to whom the boy replies that he will eat them, cores and all. And such is probably the dimly formulated purpose in the minds of the majority of Americans to-day. Let us consider what it involves, not morally—for we are placing ourselves outside that pale—but financially and politically. Are we fit to undertake a colonial policy? Could we afford to do so if we were capable of it?

There is a pleasing delusion prevalent in America which has been relatively harmless in the past but promises to be dangerous in the future. This delusion is that the prosperity of our country is due to our peculiar capacity for dominating reluctant nature, for invention, for labor, and for self-government. We think it almost a truism that we are among the shrewdest of nations. In fact, we have been spendthrifts of an estate so rich by nature as to make us feel possessed of Fortunatus' purse, with the natural result that when the normal conditions of national economics began to assert themselves relentlessly among us as in the nations of Europe, we were disposed to look for our relief to the very sources of our ills. The history of our financial legislation during the past thirty years is the history of a series of blunders that would have brought bankruptcy to any country less favored by nature. The recent war was carried on with the same extravagance that characterized the civil one, and for the same disgraceful reasons, furthering the already perilous progress of a cancerous plutocracy. A few in this country will be much the richer for this war, as they have been made the richer by various financial acts in the past, while life for the majority has grown and will continue to grow harder, and a colonial policy will intensify the process.

Very large sums of money are obviously needed to conquer foreign possessions. We have already spent more than

$100,000,000, and have secured undisputed control of—Porto Rico, rich in name alone. We shall probably spend a great many times that sum for the privilege of keeping a number of exposed colonial stations which must be fortified at additional expense, garrisoned and supported by a navy at least double the size of any that we have ever had, unless we wish to see them taken from us. To do this will increase materially the already heavy taxes of our people, none the less heavy because they are insidious and for the most part indirect. It will detract from the national prosperity, make it harder for us to maintain competition with Europe, and tend to assimilate our conditions of labor and wages to hers. And all that we may have places of refuge for a navy that we do not possess, in case of a war that we do not anticipate, to protect a canal that may never exist across Panama or Nicaragua, a canal with which we seem quite capable of dispensing, and which will certainly never be built without our consent and contributions. If the building of a Pacific canal involves what is claimed by Captain Mahan, it would be much cheaper to wage a war to prevent its construction than to pay for building what we need less than any and have reason to dread more than all.

It is said that trade follows the flag, that unless we have a navy we can have no merchant marine, and it is undeniable that one fosters the other; but surely we can forego some of the profits of the carrying trade if we are spared the cost of protecting it. A few months ago all territory controlled by the United States was in a compact mass, excepting of course Alaska. No navy was needed to maintain communication with any part of it. The nature of our country is such that we could endure the blockade of our entire coast and frontier with less annoyance than we should cause to our blockaders. The invasion of our territory tempts no foreign army. We therefore are not obliged to maintain the naval force that is necessary to the existence of the scattered British Empire or of France or even of Germany. Protection of commerce is only an incident to their unfortunate geographical position. We are sacrificing an economic advan-

tage in creating a navy with all that it implies, to do for ourselves at greater expense what they will do for us at less, leaving precisely that amount of capital free for the needed development of domestic industry.

It would seem, therefore, that from the point of view of economic well-being there is no profit in sight from an imperial policy, however energetic or successful. Nor will the colonies themselves prove sources of revenue to us, unless our experience differs from that of other and more experienced nations. Individuals have squeezed great wealth from the Spanish colonies. The nation has been the poorer for them for a century. Even Java has in recent times barely sufficed to balance Sumatra in the Dutch budget. The English colonies at best pay for themselves, and hardly that if one take into account their proportion of the maintenance of the naval establishment. The colonies of France are an annual drain of men and money. We shall be the weaker pecuniarily for every colony that we conquer. Our country is entering on this career with the ardor of Sancho Panza for the government of islands, the more distant the the better. Experience is a dear school. Can it be that Americans are of that category of mankind that will learn in no other?

And politically? Why do we readily assume that we have a vocation, as it were from heaven, to govern others? Are we so eminently successful in governing ourselves that we should be eager to extend the blessings we enjoy to less fortunate races? It is true that there are politicians among us who consider that their success in venal intrigue is a proof that "God reigns," and perhaps such a one will accept the governorship of a new Barataria with a pious prayer from his Hawaiian missionary chaplain that might run thus in its unctuous *tremolo:* "O Baal-Moloch, thou who delightest in lies, in battles, and burnt offerings, help us, thy servants who trust in thee. Thou knowest that our greed is omnivorous, our fatuousness unsearchable, and our hypocrisy infinite. Deliver us, we beseech thee, through rum, from Romanism and rebellion."

But thoughtful men among the governed have less reason than our battening rulers to be satisfied with the working of our municipal, legislative, and congressional lobbies and rings, while the latter are of such a character that even elect spiritual guides among us have discovered that with them the end must needs sanctify the means. For when that end is an appropriation and the means a falsehood we have seen it expedited with the eager speed of lightning to further so sacred a cause.

Surely it were useless and almost grotesque to pretend that democracy on a large scale among us is either efficient or economical. Towns are occasionally well governed, cities very rarely, States hardly ever, the nation not at all. Our people prefer to be oppressed by the extortion of railroads, telegraph and express companies, and to allow their lawmakers to be dishonorably controlled by them, rather than to intrust to the State the performance of functions that belong to it by nature and are elsewhere successfully performed by it, and this, because as we are told with various euphemistic circumlocutions, the State cannot be trusted, always pays more for any service than a private individual need do, and would abuse its power for electoral corruption. It has been an edifying spectacle in these last weeks to see side by side on the editorial pages of a newspaper printed in a Southern capital the most sweeping and bitter denunciations of the local government, as shameless, unprincipled, and corrupt, with exhortations to the very people who had placed this government in power to confer the blessings of Anglo-Saxon rule on as many cities, islands, and languages as possible.

If we may judge of the distant by the near and predicate the future from the past, we should fail in governing colonies in proportion to their distance and importance, an opulent and distant colony offering more means and occasion for peculation and fraud than one that might be small, poor, and close at hand. The latter, then, should be preferred; for, though equally unprofitable to our commerce, it would prove less temptation to ourselves and to our enemies.

We believe Voltaire is the author of a homely exhortation to nations to wash their dirty linen at home. Where a nation has such a large laundry of this character it would seem well to attend to it as far as may be in the privacy of our back yards, and not to flaunt it in every quarter of the globe. Thomas à Kempis suggested centuries ago that he who would govern others should first learn to govern himself. The circumstances of Captain Mahan's life have perhaps tended to hide from him the necessity of this preliminary lesson in the United States. It would be impossible to teach it to the greater part of his abettors who, with motives as base as his are generous, seek to beguile the country into a debauch of colonial imperialism. J. A.

III.

Some Phases of the Situation.

There can be little question that with the annexation of Hawaii, the appropriation of Porto Rico as a prize of war, and the probable retention of one or more islands of the Philippine and other Oriental groups, this country has made an important departure from the principles of the Founders of the Republic. Whether the change be for weal or for woe, the point to be insisted on here is that it is a change. This change does not lie in the mere acquisition of territory, or in its acquisition through war. The advocates of the new policy have talked too much of Thomas Jefferson and Louisiana, of the Mexican war and the Gadsden purchase, and of Alaska, to permit us to believe that territorial expansion is un-American or unconstitutional. These advocates have minimized, however, almost with one accord, that element of our present territorial expansion which differentiates it from all previous extensions of the national boundaries—to wit, the fact that this is the first time in our history when we have annexed territory without the belief that it would be occupied by Americans who would one day form the bulk of the population of the added regions and would in time fully exercise their rights, privileges, and duties as

citizens of one of the component States of an inviolable Union. The Louisiana Territory was annexed under stipulations with regard to future statehood. Our acquisitions of Spanish, Mexican, and Russian territory in the past looked forward to the spread of an Anglo-Saxon population that would be capable of coördinate political action with the people of the Union of States. At no time before the inception of the late war with Spain did any considerable portion of the citizens of the United States desire to control the destinies of far-distant lands, thickly populated by an alien, not savage race. We have hitherto sent our younger brothers and sons into the wilderness to build homes; now for the first time we desire to become masters and to send our agents out to look after our subject peoples and lands.

That this is our present desire can hardly be doubted. We cannot imagine, in the light of history, that we shall supplant the native populations of Porto Rico and the Philippines, and it would scarcely be a missionary enterprise in any true sense if we were to attempt to do it in Hawaii. There is no great popular expectation that any of our new possessions will be fit for statehood within a reasonable period of time, yet we are told that there is a popular desire that we should "grab" all the territory we can, no matter what the character of its population. The inference is irresistible that we have tired of the slow rôle of state builders and are determined to become rulers of peoples. In other words, we are territorial expansionists of a very different order from Jefferson.

But to what order do we belong? Obviously we have become imperialists—that is to say, we are advocates of the extension of the sway of the United States over lands and peoples presumably unfit for incorporation in the Union for a long time to come. We are also imperialists in that we rely upon our *imperium* or sway to keep these lands and peoples in subjection, and not upon their natural contiguity or affinity with our country and ourselves. Porto Rico is, indeed, within our natural sphere of influence, and Hawaii is so reckoned by the promoters of our naval development; but the

Philippines have contiguity and affinity with us only from the point of view of our trade interests. Should we insist on retaining one or more of these islands, or should we as a people accept the principle that our flag must float wherever we have the strength and the opportunity to plant it, there could be but one name for our policy. It would be properly denominated imperialism of the British, the Roman, or the Carthaginian type. For imperialism does not demand an emperor—the Roman *imperium* existed long before the days of Augustus Cæsar—but a sway exercised over one people by another, whether for commercial or military or other reasons. In her relations with Canada and Australia Great Britain occupies a position not unanalogous with that occupied by the Union with regard to its Western Territories peopled by home builders; but in her relations with India she has developed an imperial policy which would not have been less imperial if Queen Victoria had been forced to abdicate and Mr. Gladstone been elected President of a British Republic. It is needless to remark that imperialism does not necessarily mean tyranny; but it is as well to notice that, in so far as an imperial policy contemplates the planting of the American flag among civilized peoples who have not voluntarily joined their fortunes with ours, it is contradictory to the fundamental principles of that Declaration of Independence for which our ancestors bled, and gives the lie to those professions of liberality with which we have welcomed to our shores the oppressed of all mankind. It may be, indeed, that our fathers were mistaken enthusiasts, from our present point of view, when they issued their manifesto of freedom and opened their hospitable doors; it may be that our own children shall be able to say with a contemptuous pride, "nous avons changé tout cela;" but it is not possible that the thoughtful man of to-day or the historian of the future should be blind to the fact that the policy of territorial expansion now advocated contains elements so new and so contradictory to American experience that to associate it in any way with the territorial policy of Thomas Jefferson is misleading in the highest degree. Jefferson would have advocated the

spreading of democratic American ideals by peaceful means among the alien population of the Philippines, but he would have shuddered at the thought of swaying their destinies. If he were to return to life, he might possibly advocate a moderate enlargement of our navy, but he would hardly look on with equanimity at the way in which America is preparing to imitate in Hawaii the British policy which resulted in the extermination of the Maoris of New Zealand.

But Jefferson belonged to his own day, and we belong to ours. Fixed policies are impossible and absurd among the fluctuating generations of men. Of what avail is it, then, to cite the Fathers, if the imperial policy is demanded by the "living present?"

It would be plainly absurd to affirm that this or any other country is bound to maintain a policy simply because it is sanctioned by the past; but it is not foolish to claim that the burden of proof rests upon those who advocate a change from a policy so sanctioned, or that it is disingenuous to represent what is plainly new as venerably old. Nor is it vain to insist, even to deaf ears, that it is the duty of the intelligent portion of every people to understand fully the real nature of any new policy they purpose to inaugurate. Hence it is well for us to learn to call our proposed colonial system by its proper name, imperialism, and to admit frankly that it is at variance with our past policy and our cherished traditions. Having made up our minds on these points, we can proceed intelligently to discuss the advisability of the new policy as it is outlined and defended by its advocates.

The arguments brought forward by the imperialists in defense of their proposed policy seem to fall under two main categories—to wit, arguments concerned with national prestige and arguments concerned with commercial supremacy. Although these two sets of arguments frequently blend, they may be advantageously considered apart. It is said on all hands that the policy of isolation which we have pursued for a century is now outgrown. What suited a struggling band of loosely united States is unsuitable to a nation of nearly

eighty millions. We are ready to take our place among the great powers, should be consulted in all matters of world importance, and should so increase our army and navy as to be able not merely to protect our growing commercial interests, but also to take a practical hand in shaping the destinies of a world which is being more rapidly drawn together every day. But a large navy needs coaling stations, and commercial interests in these days of tariff wars are fostered by outlying possessions, hence an aggressive policy of territorial expansion is a natural corollary of the abandonment of the policy of isolation. The fact is pointed out that Great Britain and the continental powers are swiftly carving up the world between them, and the inference is drawn that by the time our present territory is thickly settled we may not be so strong relatively as we are now. Hence we are invited to bestir ourselves and to coöperate with Great Britain in order that the domination of the Anglo-Saxon race may be assured in perpetuity. As such a domination would mean the spread of our religion, our language—in short, of our ideals—it is no wonder that this plea for a joint world empire with Great Britain has made a deep impression upon people who at the time of Mr. Cleveland's Venezuelan Message were ready to attribute to Lord's Salisbury's government every sinister intention known to man.

On the other hand we are assured that the future of the world will depend mainly upon the results of the wars for commercial supremacy in which all the Western and, according to the late Mr. Pearson, all the Eastern nations also, must become engaged. A combined policy of territorial expansion and protective tariffs, backed by preponderant military and naval force, may soon give one or more European nations an opportunity to cripple our trade and commerce in such a way as to throw us back upon our home market and thus greatly to hamper our development. Such being the case, we should widen our sphere of influence as much as possible, if only for the purpose of aiding Great Britain in her titanic task of securing open markets for the world. To hold quietly back and allow Great Britain to exhaust her strength to

secure such markets, by which we ourselves should prosper, would be selfish in the extreme. Hence the navy should be augmented, colonies acquired, and the rôle of a world power unflinchingly assumed.

To sum up, it is claimed that, with an enormously increasing trade, America must abandon her policy of isolation, must protect the goods and lives of her citizens by means of a large navy, and must spread her ideals throughout the world. The possession of colonies in both oceans would greatly facilitate the movements of this navy in times of both war and peace, and would also develop trade and spread American civilization. Colonies could not be held without a great navy, and a great navy would be handicapped without colonies, while trade would eventually be handicapped without both. This is the gist of the imperial theory, viewed on its practical side; when considerations of glory and prestige are added, the prospect becomes alluring indeed.

But there are some cool-headed and perhaps unenthusiastic persons who have not been allured at all. They have pointed to the obvious fact that the mere statement that a large nation needs a wide-looking foreign policy, even though it be made by eminent publicists and ex-Secretaries of State, carries little weight unless it be supported by more and better arguments than most imperialists deign to give. A traditional policy has the advantage of presumption in its favor; a new policy has the advantage that attends most readjustments. These two advantages may be set off against one another by the judicious inquirer, and the positive arguments in favor of the proposed change must then be weighed on their merits.

With regard to the argument that it is time that we should take our place among the world powers in order to make our influence felt, the natural objection has been raised that it would be the part of prudence to inquire more narrowly than we now seem to be doing into the precise meaning of the terms so loosely used. Surely the nation that has asserted the Monroe Doctrine successfully, that has brought to terms without the use of armed force Great Britain, Spain,

and Austria in the Alabama, Virginius, and Martin Koszta incidents, is a world power in many essential points.[1] That we have been and are respected abroad in fact is a matter of history; that we are respected in word will be apparent to any observant traveler. Until there seemed to be a prospect of our being induced to pull their chestnuts out of the fire, an important portion of the English people spoke more slightingly of us than was the case with any other European nation. As for the affront offered us by Chili, that meant no more than the absurd flurry in Peru now means, nor would it be used as a serious argument save by disingenuous or purely partisan disputants. That we are not greatly considered or consulted in important European and Asiatic affairs is undoubtedly true, but it is by no means clear that such consideration and consultation would redound to our ultimate advantage, however much it might stimulate our self-consciousness; and it is surely true that, through our own action, Europe has been denied a voice in American affairs.

More important still is the fact, urged by all our great statesmen from Washington to Cleveland, that we have reaped the advantages of peace and repose from our abstention from European politics; that we have escaped the burden of standing armies, and have been allowed to develop, socially and politically, unmenaced by external disturbances. That such peace and repose is not ignoble is plain both from history and from legend, both from the chronicles of the Antonines and from the fables of the Age of Gold. It may, indeed, be our duty now, or at some future time, to sacrifice our serenity for the sake of self-preservation or for the best interests of the race; but we should not fling away the gifts of Providence for merely sentimental or *doctrinaire* reasons. To help England in the East for the sake of our commercial relations may possibly, but not probably, be an imperative duty; but to help England because she is in straits on account of an economic policy forced upon her

[1] See an excellent editorial in the *Nation* for August 4, 1898.

by her own peculiar situation, and because we admire her pluck and honor the ties of blood, would be a rash step on the part of a people who have and can reasonably expect to have no such base of supplies and operations as is furnished to Great Britain, France, and Russia by their Asiatic possessions. That Great Britain should retain her Eastern trade and her Indian empire may seem to be desirable from the point of view of the Anglo-Saxon race; but it is by no means clear that the Slavs are not better fitted to inherit the Orient, and it is absolutely certain that the United States should do nothing to jeopardize its domination of both Americas. Yet if we insist upon dissipating our strength by interference in European and Asiatic affairs, what assurance have we that we can prevent, by force, a contemptuous disregard of the Monroe Doctrine by the allied powers? And so far as right and justice go, on what basis, besides that of brute force, could we maintain it, were we to abandon the policy of confining ourselves to America?

But do our commercial interests really require our abandonment of the policy of isolation? This is too broad a question to be more than glanced at here, yet it may be observed that a great navy eats into the profits of commerce, and increases the number of those whose interests lie in breaking, not keeping, that peace so essential to trade and industry. Then, too, colonies are subject to attack by foreign powers, especially when they lie outside a nation's natural sphere of influence; nor can they be made to buy goods they do not want, except by means of laws in the passing of which they can have had no voice. Should we ever be brought to pass such laws, we shall have plainly sunk to the level of ideals against which we fought vigorously more than a century ago. Furthermore, it remains to be proved that American trade has hitherto suffered disastrously from our lack of a large navy to support it (one of the great points with our Jingos is the present importance of our trade), or that it ever will be excluded from the ports of nations which are, year by year, becoming more dependent upon one another for the comforts of life. In other words, the im-

perial theory seems to require the race to look forward to a selfish, "grab as one can" future, in which every nation must be girded for the fray.

Can we believe in such a future as some noted publicists are inclined to do? The present writer cannot, and this not merely because he is optimist enough to believe in a Providence that is guiding the world upward and on. It looks amazingly as if the ingenious speculations of Mr. Pearson and others, with regard to the Armageddons to be fought by the merchant nations of the West and East, were largely based on the application of the theory of evolution to history. Given the doctrine of the survival of the fittest and the present military and industrial turmoil of Europe, and it is easy enough to develop such speculations. But the whole course of civilization has militated against natural selection and the survival of the fittest in many important particulars, and this will probably be true to a greater extent in the future. Despite recent wars and rumors of war, the mind of man is recoiling, more and more, from the barbarous practice of settling disputes, whether individual or national, by force of arms. Although many eminent writers maintain that war will continue to the end of time, and that it is necessary in order that the virile qualities of the race may be preserved, their arguments, besides being insulting to Providence, are so suspiciously like those urged in the past by the advocates of witchcraft, dueling, and slavery, that they fail to exert much influence over thoughtful men. That war will eventually disappear among civilized peoples may be the ideal conception of the poet and the philanthropist, just as a cosmopolitan world empire is the ideal of the publicist and the historian; but it is precisely because they are ideals and because men are capable of indefinite improvement, that they are almost certain to become realities in the future. Nor need this future be indefinitely postponed. The present armed state of Europe and the prevalence of protective tariffs are due rather to the birth of two new nations and the internal convulsions of two old ones—matters temporary in their nature—than to any unvarying

working of natural selection among races or to a consistent and immutable following out of competitive colonial and commercial policies. It is at least a grim future that Darwin and the Muse of History set before us, if we are to believe that men will continue to cut one another's throats and rip one another's pockets for an unending period; and it is strange that many persons who have ceased to believe in a hell after life should insist upon creating one on this earth for every generation that is still unborn.

But to return to the concrete question of our own trade interests, especially with regard to the Philippines, attention should be called to the fact that many competent authorities doubt whether the profits that would accrue to certain classes of traders would equal the cost to the general government of maintaining our supremacy in the islands. If this be true, it would be wise for the people whose taxes support the general government to consider whether they propose to foster special interests to such an extent. Such fostering is of course in line with our previous willingness to tax ourselves in support of what we have called euphemistically "our infant industries;" but when industries insist on roaming from home in search of profit and adventure, can they be fairly called infant even by this people to whom all things are possible? The whole question of the morality of taxing the many that the few may thrive may be waived, since we have insisted on doing this at home for over one hundred years; but we cannot waive the question whether it is moral for us practically to bind future generations to a continuance of our own more than doubtful policy. Nor can we waive the question whether it is moral to propose to make the Philippines pay by an application of a system of forced labor much resembling slavery. Some of the advocates of expansion, foreseeing the effect upon the public should it be shown that annexation would redound merely to the interests of a class, have actually suggested that, should we take the Philippines, we might make them profitable by applying to them such a *corvée* system as the Dutch have successfully worked in

Java. But, as Mr. Worthington Ford has recently pointed out, this system was adopted when different conceptions were held of the relations of a State with its subjects; and it would certainly seem curious if the nation that commemorates with pride the promulgation, by President Lincoln, of the Proclamation of Emancipation should, either of its own initiative or through the delegation of powers to chartered companies or to private individuals, establish or permit, in colonies taken by force, a system of labor akin to slavery. That a *corvée* might be made to pay is possible, although not altogether probable; but we should not tolerate such a relic of feudal tyranny in our Southern States, where the negro population might profit from it, and we could not therefore apply it elsewhere without laying ourselves open to the charge of inconsistency. It would indeed be a queer revolution of the wheel of history should American republicans establish, at the end of the nineteenth century, a system of forced labor or illegitimate taxation which French republicans did away with at the end of the eighteenth.

But there are arguments that may weigh with our people more than the fear that they may be considered inconsistent. Men are rarely logical in their politics, but they are not usually lacking in sagacity with regard to the paying features of any trade, and it is by no means certain that the retention of Manila can be made to pay any one outside the Asiatic sphere of influence. Mr. Worthington C. Ford, lately in office as a statistician, has recently published in the *Atlantic Monthly* a singularly interesting and valuable study of the "New Opportunities for American Commerce," in which he comes to the conclusion that we should not turn our eyes toward Asia, but should confine our attention to the West Indies. He shows that, for our trade with China to reach the figures that dazzle the imperialists, a social revolution of vast extent would have to take place in that country. For example: how are we going to turn the Chinese into meat eaters in order to make them buy Chicago beef? How are we going to make them use manufactures they do not understand or want, when Japan, which

gained the privilege of establishing mills and factories on Chinese territory after the late war, has had to forego using its rights on account of the sullen opposition of the conquered people? How, too, can we compete with Russia and Japan should China be divided, unless it be admitted that we are each and all of us endowed with the capacity of the true journalist to whip every one in sight and not feel tired after our exertions? Were we a nation of demigods instead of one of demagogues, we might indeed accomplish a tithe of the work mapped out for us since the beginning of the war; but being merely mortals, it would be as well if we would read Mr. Ford's article before rolling up our sleeves afresh.

But some will say: "How about making Manila an American Hong Kong to act as a base for the operations of our exporters?" This query is, of course, pertinent, for it is obvious that we could not decently turn the selfish Spaniards out and make Manila anything but a free port, but Mr. Ford has answered it in a most conclusive manner. He shows that the exports of British goods to Hong Kong since 1881 have fallen off in value by one-half, and the imports by one-third. American imports have fallen off one-third and exports have increased in equal ratio; but "Hong Kong figures in the total trade of the United States for less than four-tenths of one per cent." Germany practically passes over Hong Kong and tries to establish centers of trade in China itself. On the other hand, Japan's transactions with Hong Kong have nearly doubled, and are rapidly increasing. If figures do not lie, does not this point to Asiatic control of Asiatic trade and ports?

But we have laid Mr. Ford under too much contribution already, and we may take leave of him with a somewhat compensatory compliment by asking how long it would be before our official representatives at Manila would be able to handle trade statistics as well as he can? Mr. Ford's services were dispensed with by the authorities at Washington; would the latter be likely to value abroad those expert services they so often despise at home? It is much to be

feared that as a great national institution is said to have got an executive head because the wife of a politician preferred Washington to Pekin as a residence, so Manila might get a governor general because the daughter of a politician wished to carry on a flirtation in bad Spanish. Such things and worse things happen every day, and we manage not merely to survive but to flourish. Yet it is plain, when we consider the fine moral qualities and the mental vigor of our people in their private capacities, that flourishing in this great country is one thing and governing distant alien dependencies is quite another. Neither England nor Holland succeeded in dealing with the Oriental until they understood him, and this understanding has been obtained only after centuries of experience and study. The English and Dutch literature relating to the problems of Eastern colonization amounts to thousands of volumes. Our Indian agents have not enriched our own literature to any great extent. That we could learn in time to govern Orientals will hardly be denied, but that we shall prefer the slow methods of study to the rough and ready methods of obtaining our desires by browbeating our helpless subjects is an affirmation that some of us would hesitate to make. We deprecate the imputation of pessimism, but candor obliges us to confess to a presentiment that just as the discoverer of the Philippines, the noble Portuguese Magellan, fell a victim to the hostility of the natives, so most of us who have recently discovered these islands on our maps will suffer many evil things at the hands of native half-breeds and savages if we do not leave them alone. A slight experience with the half-breeds of Cuba has served to dissipate many romantic notions about heroes fighting for their firesides; but because we have these half-breeds now on our hands is not the best of reasons for encumbering ourselves with others still less promising.

But we may dismiss this phase of the subject with brief comments upon the closer relations we are urged to form with Great Britain and upon the moral arguments advanced to justify our plunging into international complications.

With regard to the proposal that America should ally her-

self with Great Britain for the control and better government of the world, it can scarcely be denied that the spread of Anglo-Saxon ideas of justice, morality, and religion would redound to the advantage of the entire human race. Yet no one can fail to perceive that in many respects civilization would become monotonous and unbeautiful if any one race or nation controlled the world, and there are more practical considerations that may make Americans hesitate before deciding to ally themselves formally with Great Britain.

A cordial understanding would, of course, be to the advantage of both countries and, we may venture to believe, of the world; but the chief advantages of an alliance would inure to Great Britain, which would have a partner in what has long since proved a harassing and dubious experiment. It is by no means certain that her colonial empire has been a source of real strength to England any more than the colonies of France have been to her. Her wisest statesman of this century, Mr. Gladstone, believed that the colonies have been a millstone about the mother country's neck; nor has it been clearly proved that the two chief advantages that the advocates of a Greater Britain claim for the colonial system —to wit, an outlet for surplus population and an increased market for English products—might not have been secured under a system of temporary rather than permanent control of the colonies founded by adventurous Englishmen.

However this may be, it is obvious that none of the chief reasons that made England an imperial colonizing power applies to America. The agricultural classes of this country are not likely to be thrown out of employment on account of foreign competition; the commercial classes have a tremendous home market which is capable of almost indefinite expansion. The continent of North America and the West Indies offer an ample field for growth, and there is reason to believe that the possession of far-outlying dependencies and an alliance with England would serve to dissipate rather than to concentrate the nation's powers of expansion. In assuming this position we may indeed incur the appellation of "Little Americans," but this would seem to be preferable to

incurring that of "Little Britons" through a premature attempt to follow in the devious footsteps of the greatest empire of modern times.

As to the moral arguments for imperialism, it may be safely affirmed that, if it be wrong for the United States to leave Cuba and Porto Rico and the Philippines under the tyranny of Spanish soldiers and priests, it was fully as wrong for such a great and peculiarly unselfish nation to bring the war to an end without freeing the Canary Islands and, indeed, making a conquest of Spain itself, in order that the blessings of American civilization might be spread over that benighted peninsula. It may, indeed, be admitted that the results of the war have rendered American temporary or permanent control of some of Spain's colonies both morally and politically necessary; but all arguments for the extension of our domain on the ground of our general duty to humanity and of our essential superiority to the Spanish are dangerously misleading. On the basis of such reasoning any strong nation might easily persuade itself that it was its duty to wipe out its neighbors, and nearly every statesman would be turned into a political Pecksniff. If our missionaries cannot preach Christ's gospel, if our writers and artists and scientists cannot spread our ideals and mental achievements, if our people cannot possess their consciences at ease, unless we are always thrashing inferior peoples, dispossessing them of their territories, and prying about for grievances to redress—the nation which a century ago seemed to be a fair morning star heralding the dawn of a new era of liberty and peace will be shortly seen dashing through the political heavens, a lurid and destructive comet.

But if the moral grounds for territorial expansion are nearly always slim when a more or less civilized people is to be dispossessed, there are certain moral principles that may operate against such a policy which cannot be ignored. In the first place it is plain, as we have seen, that it is unjust and un-American for this country to take permanent possession of any territory occupied by a homogeneous, fairly civilized people without the full and free consent of that people. The

end of political life as conceived by every true American since Washington's day, is liberty—the liberty of every citizen to choose the form of government under which he will live. It was in accordance with this principle of liberty that the American colonies broke away from the mother country and that the slaves were given their freedom during the civil war. For the United States to determine the fate of any island, no matter how small, without the consent of its homogeneous, civilized inhabitants is for this great Republic not merely to abandon its former policy—that can be done if wisdom dictates—but to take a backward step toward lower ideals, which is something not to be pardoned.

But it may well happen that the population of the outlying territory may be desirous of annexation. What moral responsibility then rests upon the conscientious citizen of the United States? One form of responsibility is plain. If any citizen believes that this Republic, whether from its form of government or from the incapacity or inexperience of its people, is unable or unlikely to govern distant dependencies in such a manner as to redound to the happiness and welfare of the inhabitants of the latter, he is morally bound to cast his influence against an extension of the colonial policy. On this point there can be no doubt whatsoever in the mind of any lover of his kind. Nor is it a merely theoretical point. One mighty republic broke down disastrously in its attempt to govern colonies, and its liberty-loving citizens became the most cruel and rapacious oppressors when intrusted with colonial offices. The people of the Southern States have not yet forgotten the woes they suffered when they were governed from Washington. Even to-day it is a matter of general complaint that proper men are not secured for the internal administration of the country, and the American who believes this to be a true complaint may well hesitate to espouse a policy that may inflict incompetent officials upon helpless dependencies. On the other hand, it must be remembered that increased capacity often follows increased responsibility, although it is equally to be observed that no wise people would undertake new responsibilities with a

cheerful mind if its past record in such matters were unsatisfactory.

In this connection it is necessary to call special attention to what is regarded on all hands as a national disgrace—to wit, the utter incompetency displayed by civil officials in the conduct of the late war. Every one of us, whether he believed the war to be necessary or not, has rejoiced in the success that has attended the national arms; but every one of us has felt proportionally indignant at the wretched treatment accorded our troops. Have we sufficiently reflected, however, upon the fact that, if politics has so honeycombed the government at Washington with corruption that it cannot even provide for the safety and comfort of its own soldiers, there is absolutely no chance that alien subjects of that government will be treated as anything but sheep to be fleeced? Have we realized that the incompetent arbiters of our own destinies whom we elect to legislate for us and rule us are the men to whom we blandly propose to commit the fortunes of millions of people who never injured us? Perhaps we think that things will soon be better, that there will be court-martials and investigations, that the guilty will be punished and the families of the dead soldiers pensioned; and that when these things are done the inhabitants of Porto Rico, Hawaii, and the Philippines will celebrate each recurring Fourth of July by singing "Halleluiah" around "Old Glory."

Such thoughts would be in keeping with our optimistic disposition, but they are hardly justified by history. Investigations prompted by popular indignation rarely accomplish anything permanent. The whisky ring is neither dead nor companionless, and Boss Croker reigns in the place of Boss Tweed. The Congress that inaugurated the late war with appropriate exhibitions of fisticuffs will be succeeded by Congresses that will drink success in the Senate barroom to the new States of Hawaii, Porto Rico, and Manila. The weak politician whose incompetence has caused the deaths of hundreds of soldiers will find his counterpart in the cabinet official who will unload thousands of spoilsmen upon help-

less colonials. It is useless to shut our eyes to a state of things that is bound to exist as long as the American people continue to cherish the delusion that democracy means the consultation of the people in all governmental matters, instead of the right of the people to elect trained, independent men who shall represent truly and govern as their wisdom dictates. This was the democratic government that Washington and Jefferson advocated and administered, that Andrew Jackson overthrew, and that the demagogues of our day are fast burying out of sight. Until a really representative democracy is restored among us, it is almost wicked in us to turn our eyes abroad and to talk imperialism.

Of course what has just been said will seem to some to be treasonable and un-American. It is neither. If there are any traitors in this country, they are to be found among the people who, when attention is called to the dangerous state of our politics, reply by saying that we are honest and easy-going as a nation, and make money and have fast railroad trains. If there are any people who are un-American, they are to be found among those who cannot bear criticism and who seek to fling abuse at any man who is independent enough to denounce what he believes to be wrong. For to be truly American means to be manly, and nothing can be less manly than a silly optimism in the face of obvious and pressing dangers.

And it is the sheerest kind of silly optimism—more disgusting than any form of pessimism—that prates about the mission of this country to reform the world by renouncing its isolation before it has cleansed the kennels of its political corruption. It is silly optimism that fights for the independence of an island that cannot be independent if it would and that plainly belongs to the very country that proclaims its independence. It is silly optimism that thinks that Cuba or Porto Rico or any other dependency can be well governed by a people who tolerate ward bosses and political pettifoggers. It is silly optimism that shakes a fist at the powers of Europe, yet can hardly manage to provide one decent camp for its own soldiers. It is silly optimism that is for-

ever exclaiming, "My country, right or wrong!" when it is plain to every one who has eyes to see that might and numbers cannot make a thing right, and that it is just this pseudo-patriotism of the vociferous kind that degenerates into partisan support of political and military cliques and leads to such scandals as that now shaming France. In short, it is silly optimism that leads us to think that we are the petted children of fortune who can strut with impunity over the world's stage, pointing the finger of scorn at less fortunate and virtuous peoples. If it were only our bad and vicious classes who proposed to take all the wild leaps in the dark that have been contemplated recently in this country, we should know what counter steps to take; but unfortunately they are proposed by honest and good men, and God has never yet in his wisdom vouchsafed to disclose to the race any way of rendering a respectable ignoramus innocuous.

But of what use is all this destructive criticism of a policy upon which the country is already embarked? We have annexed Hawaii and gained Porto Rico by conquest, and we are rapidly engaged in enlarging our navy. We cannot, if we would, draw back from many of the consequences of the adoption of an imperial policy; those who oppose it are seemingly crying in the wilderness; the nation has tasted power, and, like a young tiger that has tasted blood, cannot now be tamed.

It is true that such a discussion as the present would have very little effect upon the public even if it came from a far abler pen. The class that is affected by criticism is at all times a mere fringe upon the great interwoven texture of the people. When a rare scholar and truly brave and sincere man like Professor Charles Eliot Norton ventures to stand forth and tell even this generous and kind-hearted nation that it is going sadly astray in a grave crisis, he is almost stoned for his utterances, It will take centuries of education before any people, as a whole, will be able to ponder seriously any political step with which their sentiments and emotions are intimately concerned. Indeed, at the present stage of human development, it may be doubted whether a whole peo-

ple could pause and criticise matters as Professor Norton can without being hopelessly sordid or decadent. Nor would the criticism of a sordid or decadent class or people be sound criticism. We are therefore impaled upon the horns of a dilemma. Nations do foolish and wrong things which wise and calm critics reprobate; yet they could not have acted calmly without having lost their force and strength, and they could not have acted wisely considering the untrained character of human nature taken in the aggregate.

But without criticism human education could not progress. The utterances of Professor Norton have impressed but few of his countrymen, but these few will repeat his words; and in so far as he has stood for the ideal truth, his words will prevail more and more upon future generations. "Truth crushed to earth shall rise again," said the American poet, and in the whole range of literature we shall find no nobler aphorism. Hence, whatever may be our despair of affecting the masses at any crisis, and whatever may be the effects of that destiny which seems to drag the nations onward upon perilous paths, it is never amiss for the student to criticise the movements, political and social, of the great world in which he abides, an observant but little esteemed spectator.

Such being the present writer's views as to the nature and uses of criticism, he will make no apology for the discussion of the imperial policy contained in the preceding pages. Nor will he apologize for drawing attention, in conclusion, to one important lesson thrust upon all thoughtful citizens by the outbreak of the war with Spain and by the entrance of the United States upon a new policy of territorial aggrandizement. This lesson relates to the limitations to the truly popular character of our government.

We are accustomed to the statement that the government of the United States is a government of the people, for the people, and by the people, and most of us, unless we have thought and read about the matter, have fondly imagined that the American people are the sole arbiters of their political destiny. Perhaps most Americans think so still, even after the rupture with Spain, because it has been sedulously main-

tained that the war was a popular one. Probably it was in a sense, but the fact remains that the American people have had no real opportunity to speak their minds, that the war was brought on mainly by the press, the pulpit, and a Congress and administration elected on a purely financial issue. In no way was the formal voice of the American people recorded for war, and, although it is fairly certain, from the response to the call to arms and from other signs, that the country was borne into the war on a wave of popular sentiment, it is equally clear that no opportunity was afforded for that calm reflection which alone can give the voice of the people any resemblance to the voice of God. We have long known, of course, that the power to declare and conduct wars must reside in Congress and the executive, but we have never before been so completely taught the helplessness of the people in a time of sentimental excitement to take grave counsel and to prevent themselves from being swept from their political moorings into new and untried seas. The lesson was a salutary one and had to come. It has shown the intellectual minority how small their power really is in a democratic state; it has thrown a flood of light upon the depth of the religious sentiments in a people who can make "vengeance" their watch cry; it has proved that the citizens of a republic, trained to the exercise of political privileges and duties, are as liable to be stirred into warlike fury as the inhabitants of any monarchy or empire; it has cast grave doubts upon the speedy advent of an age of universal peace and cosmopolitan brotherhood; and finally, it has taught us, as no other lesson of history has ever done, not that the Republic is to be at all despaired of, but that we must not trust in principles alone to the exclusion of trust in tried, honorable, and wise men, and that everywhere and always "eternal vigilance is the price of liberty."

W. P. TRENT.